Page Jubilee Spring Issue

*Tells the Facts and Names the Names*

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## *April Was a Jolly Month*

# A16: Inside/Outside Stories

BY JOANN WYPIJEWSKI

Sometime around 8 AM on Monday, April 17, about twenty Metro DC police in modified riot gear posed in front of the White House while two of their fellow officers snapped their pictures. This was Day 2 of mass protests against the IMF and the World Bank, and the closest anyone would come that day to a tourist moment in a city usually crawling with tourists. Across the faces in blue were the dubious smiles of an even more dubious victory. Here was the power core of downtown Washington vacant and militarized; the Treasury and Commerce departments locked tight, along with State, Interior, the General Services Administration, the federal Office of Personnel Management and almost every other office and store in a thirteen-by-eight-block area. Here was the lobbyist corridor of K Street desolate, no phones ringing, or palms greased,or promises greedily made. "We didn't lose the city", Police Chief Charles Ramsey would say later, and, taking note, the next day's morning papers would say the demonstrators had "failed".

Unlike the WTO conclave in Seattle last November, the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank proceeded more or less on schedule (even if other business at those institutions was thwarted, all but employees essential to the meetings having been told to stay home). And Washington never became an all-out war zone. The police ($5 million in overtime, $1 million in new riot equipment), the National Guard, US Marshals and about twenty other security forces at varying stages of readiness—together, they had shut down the city in order to save it.

Uniformly, the big media led their reports of A16 (tag for the two-day protest beginning April 16) with images of policemen beating, gassing and otherwise manhandling young counter-culture demonstrators. Liberals love this sort of thing; it allows them, simultaneously, to write off the radicals as near-hoodlums acting out individual, as opposed to collective, passions and to disdain some cops as thugs. (It's the old "extremes of both sides" formula, expressed in all its unselfconscious nuttiness by the Washington Times, to wit, "The protesters were concerned about police batons, gas masks and pepper-spray guns, and the officers became concerned when they saw protesters donning goggles and bandanas for protection.") Where the demonstrators weren't drawn as mindless children bored with privilege, they were victims. Either way, they were powerless.

But if victory is measured in offensive power at the scene of protest, then the Radical Cheerleaders from American University ("J-U-S-T-I-C-E, Justice, Justice will set us free!"), the magical puppets from Vermont, the spooky black bloc of anarchists and the hundreds of other affinity groups from all over the country that made up the direct-action faction of the Mobilization for Global Justice had it all over the police. The latter managed to defend their positions only by the threat, and occasional use, of heavy arms and chemical agents. By their own admission, they never knew where the demonstrators would be coming from next. Like a disciplined many-headed guerrilla squad—it's too early to speak of armies—different groups took one intersection, marched to another, rounded the corner of a third. They had determined their positions days before, had modified those as they got new

(A16 continued on page 4)

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# Our Little Secrets

## Elian: This is How We Do Things Here

There is a sound case to be made for dropping a tactical nuclear weapon on the Cuban section of Miami. (Don't worry. We would issue an early warning to CounterPunchers in the impacted zip codes. Best renew your sub now, just to be on the safe side.) The move would be applauded heartily by most Americans. Alas, Operation Good Riddance would require the sort of mature political courage sadly lacking in Washington these days.

Since we regard Elian's Miami "family" as a disgusting bunch of child-exploiters we rejoiced at the removal of Elian. But of course Reno screwed up royally, after her correct determination on January 5 that Elian's father was close to his son and should be the sole authority to speak on his behalf in immigration matters. But in the months thereafter she dithered. As Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights puts it, "Reno allowed the great uncle to abuse Elian in a number of ways: taking him to Disneyworld five days after his mother's death, allowing him to become the poster-child for the Cuban-American National Foundation, allowing him to be interviewed by Diane Sawyer. She never even issued an order to the great uncle that such uncaring conduct had to cease. She could have easily ordered Elian removed from the great uncle on this basis alone."

These sentiments notwithstanding, Ratner thinks the final operation was legitimate. "I think there was a real chance of danger in Miami. Remember, this is a community made up of a number of terrorists whom our government directed and paid for. Anything was possible."

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## Militarization of More or Less Everything

Meanwhile CounterPunch marvels at the shock with which many supposedly well informed citizens are discovering that no well dressed federal enforcement officer would dream of going out on assignment without automatic weapon, full camo, hand grenades, CS tear gas canister, hand gun, knife, goggles and a backup SWAT team.

After INS agents snatched Elian, Chris Matthews was excitedly telling his MSNBC audience that the famous AP photo of the Elian snatch maybe proved "the black helicopter crowd" might be right when they said America was turning into a police state. Welcome to America, Chris. Where have you been for the past 30 years? Don't you know that every day, somewhere here in the Land of the Free, squads of heavily armed men looking exactly like the fellow in the AP picture are bursting through someone's front door, screaming at the terrified occupants to lie faced down on the floor, trashing the furniture, shooting the dog, running amok? It's standard operating procedure in drug busts, INS raids, some IRS operations, joint Fed/local cop arrests, etc etc.

Nearly 90 per cent of police departments in towns with a population of over 50,000 maintain SWAT teams.70 per cent of towns with smaller populations have them too. SWAT teams are now routinely dispatched for everything from drug raids to bomb scares.

The militarization of law enforcement has been proceeding for over thirty years. It started under LBJ, gathered steam under RN, and roared ahead from the Reagan era through GB and Billy Boy. In 1989 Bush created six regional Joint Task Forces with the Pentagon to coordinate military and civilian police agencies in the drug war. Congress exempted these from the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 prohibiting the military from engaging in domestic law enforcement operations. In just three years, between 1995 and 1997, the DoD released over a million pieces of equipment to police forces across the country, everything from grenade launchers to armored personnel carriers, M-16s, kevlar body armor and laser surveillance equipment.

Cops-as-soldiers tend to see citizens as enemies, are more likely to open fire on this "enemy". In 1990 62 people died at the hands of the police; by the first nine months of 1998 that number had climbed by more than 230 per cent, to 205.

In the name of fighting political radicals, Clinton has allowed the Pentagon to train domestic law enforcement agencies and accompany them on their missions, forever erasing the difference between military and police operations. More than that, the military has been conducting large, live-fire training exercises in major American cities for years. Known as Military Operations in Urban Terrain, or MOUT, these exercises have been staged in dozens of cities across the country, including Pittsburgh, Houston, Chicago and Charlotte, North Carolina, with residents blasted awake in the middle of the night by hundreds of military troops dropping from helicopters hovering above the streets, firing machine guns and throwing flash-bang and smoke grenades.

Then, on October 7 of last year, top military officials and their civilian superiors announced changes in the Pentagon's command structure designed to give the military a supporting role in responding to domestic terrorist attacks or natural disasters. The new structure renames the U.S. Atlantic Command as the U.S. Joint Forces Command, and authorizes it to assign military troops to work with federal law enforcement agencies and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. According to the October 8 issue of USA Today, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen brushed aside concerns about federal troops operating at home. The military must "deal with the threats we are most likely to face", Cohen said. "The Ameri-

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can people should not be concerned about it. They should welcome it."

## GITLIN ALERT! MILLIONS FLEE

Another deadly cloud of Gitlins darkened America's Easter weekend. Many Easter egg hunts had to be abandoned as parents seized their tots and headed to the deep shelters. The release came after a lapse in security at NPR saw a toxic outbreak of Gitlins on Weekend Edition. Discussing the state of the left, NYU Prof Todd Gitlin once again denounced the radicals in the late 1960s for not standing behind Hubert Humphrey, thus allowing Richard Nixon to capture the presidency.

Suppose they had rallied to Hubert and HH had beaten Nixon and entered the White House. History would have taken a different turn. There would have been no secret bombing of Cambodia. HH would have done it openly with the full support of the Congress. The war would have dragged on longer, with HH as terrified as was LBJ at being baited by the Republicans as the man, and party, that lost Vietnam. There would have been no wage and price controls, no EPA, no OSHA. HH would have opened the north coast of Alaska to oil drilling. There would have been no FOIA, and we wouldn't have had our Greatest President and First Lady, Gerald and Betty Ford. Enough said.

## SHADY ARBOUR

Shortly after NATO missiles and bombs began killing civilians in Kosovo and Serbia, Michael Mandel, a law professor at York University in Canada, filed a complaint with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia alleging that NATO and key leaders in the US and Great Britain had committed war crimes. Over the past year, Mandel, and his colleagues have supplemented the original complaint with numerous other filings, documenting human rights violations by the humanitarian warriors. But so far the United Nations' tribunal has yet to open an investigation into the complaints, despite a new report by Human Rights Watch—an early and avid proponent of intervention—condemning the civilian casualities.

On March 15, Mandel sent another complaint to Justice Carla del Ponte, the new chief prosecutor for the tribunal, who replaced Justice Louise Arbour in October. Mandel's sharply worded letter protests the tribunal's refusal to investigate NATO's actions, saying that del Ponte has turned "the investigation into more of a farce than a judicial proceeding". Mandel's letter makes a solid case that far from being an independent investigator, the tribunal has conducted itself "as if it were an organ of NATO and not the United Nations".

Mandel had hoped that Del Ponte, who comes from Switzerland which is nominally outside the NATO alliance, would take a more aggressive stance than Arbour, the Canadian. And there seemed to be reason for optimism. At a December press conference Del Ponte declared that she would be quite willing to hold NATO accountable if evidence of crimes was unearthed. "If I am not willing to do that, then I am not in the right place", Del Ponte said. "I must give up my mission." This did not sit well with NATO and the US State Department, which protested strongly. Del Ponte quickly backpedaled. On December 30, she issued a retraction to the effect that "NATO is not under investigation" and there was "no formal inquiry" under way.

Since then Del Ponte has been moving closer and closer to NATO. On January 19, she had a private meeting with NATO secretary general George Robertson, the object of numerous war crimes complaints. After the meeting, Del Ponte made a point of saying that she had not broached the topic of NATO war crimes with Robertson or any other NATO leader. Two weeks later Del Ponte was in London where she had a session with British foreign minister Robin Cook, also identified as a responsible party in several war crimes complaints filed with the tribunal. Following that meeting Del Ponte was asked if any progress had been made in the investigation of NATO. "Our work is not yet done, but what we can say is that up until now we have no indications that we should open an inquiry," Del Ponte said. But there is no evidence that the UN tribunal has even started looking into NATO's actions. In fact, on March 9, a spokesman for Del Ponte praised NATO troops, saying that they "respect the rule of law" and that any "prosecution is very unlikely".

Mandel calls Del Ponte's refusal to open an inquiry a "disgrace" and says that the tribunal has evidence that "NATO planners not only knowingly killed civilians, but deliberately set out to do so." He points specifically to the bombing of the Grdelica and Varvarin Bridges (on April 12 and May 20) and the strikes on the Nis marketplace on May 7.

Mandel is convinced that the US backed the creation of the UN tribunal only in order to advance its own strategic interests in the Balkans. He has marshalled a compelling set of facts to back up this assertion, starting in January 1999, when Judge Arbour made a high-profile visit to the Kosovo border, where she endorsed the US/KLA accounts of Serb atrocities at Racak. This made-for-tv event became a rallying point for the war, despite later accounts that the events in Racak might have been considrably murkier than was supposed.

Shortly after the NATO bombing raids had started, Arbour announced the indictment of "Arkan" (subsequently assassinated), which had been kept secret since 1997, helping to amplify the drumbeat of US-backed propaganda about Serbian atrocities. After the press began to focus on civilian deaths, Arbour again came to NATO's rescue, holding a joint appearance with Robin Cook, where she accepted a NATO-prepared dossier on Serbia "war crimes". Soon thereafter, Arbour met with Madeleine Albright, who used the opportunity to inform the world that the US was the principal financial backer of the UN tribunal.

Two weeks later, Arbour announced the indictment of Milosevic for the events at Racak, based on undisclosed evidence gather in the middle of a war zone.

After the bombing came to an end, Arbour handed over the investigation of Serbian war crimes to NATO troops in Kosovo, even though they had motives to falsify evidence in order to justify their own actions. CP

***Nearly 90 per cent of police departments in towns with a population of over 50,000 maintain SWAT teams. 70 per cent of towns with smaller populations have them too.***

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(Continued from page 1)

intelligence, had defined the roles of "arrestables" and "nonarrestables", had delegated their own medical and legal attendants, had formed rapid-response teams and tactical alliances linking affinity groups to clusters, to super-clusters, and on to groups in the permitted march and rally on Sunday. Shank the Bank, the affinity group out of Seattle that adopted me, agreed to back up the position of the Friends of Fucking Florida and a Missouri group at 5 AM on Sunday, before making the procession to the area anchored by its super-cluster, Radical Alliance, a little while later.

Beginning at about 11 or so, a group of us would move back and forth between the direct action near the IMF and World Bank buildings and the rally nearby at the Ellipse. The black bloc, moving purposefully under its black and red flags, often in near silence ("Where do you come from?" "From out of hiding"), scuffled with police from time to time but it defined its chief mission as the protection and defense of the main body of protesters. Many times during the day police donned their gas masks and advanced; many times our lines grew more defiant, more jubilant. People appeared out of nowhere passing around baggies of vinegar for soaking bandanas against the possible gas attack. The chants grew more exuberant; the cops backed down. The cry went up: "Ain't no power like the power of the people, 'cause the power of the people don't stop." This happened easily as many times as, and possibly more often than, the violent assaults by police. One tense face-off on Monday between police and a small group from the black bloc dissolved when the protesters tossed marshmallow Peeps, perennial Easter-basket favorite, in the cops' direction, calling out "Power to the Peeps!" The police retreated in laughter. "Let's never lose our sense of the ridiculous", said one of the participants.

Those April days in Washington broke together many skeins of organizations: 50 Years Is Enough campaign against the World Bank (originally a project of the International Rivers Network); Jubilee 2000, the international campaign to cancel third world debt; Ralph Nader's various anti-coalition and his followers in the Green Party; blocs of black-clad anarchists still fervid from Seattle; Direct Action Network; various grads Ruckus Society training camps; the Zap the Gap group from northern California, which brought back streaking to nation's capital; student organizers of the anti-sweatshop movement; and labor militants.

No one, least of all the demonstrators, should have really expected that we could have prevented the IMF/WB meeting from happening. The coordinators of the direct-action faction had essentially taken the plan from Seattle as a template for Washington. It was a strategic error. Police habituated to protecting presidents are far more controlling, and controlled, than those accustomed to protecting Starbucks—neither side even bothered with Starbucks in DC—and the cops too had studied the tapes from Seattle. The father of a Maryland State Trooper, one of the units mobilized for A16, told me his son was part of a team that had been taken to Atlanta for such video review and riot training and while there was given the instruction that should things get dangerously out of hand, "don't worry about anything; shoot to kill". The father was a union man supporting the broad aims of the protest.

In DC the police would strike first. Early in the morning on the day before the protest, they raided the Convergence Center, locus for the Direct Action Network and strategic hub/support link for everyone mustered to block the meetings. In front of the police barrier, a kid held a sign saying "Excuse the delay. State repression underway". The center never reopened. Late that afternoon police conducted what might be called an exemplary arrest, encircling about 600 people—most of them protesters marching from a mini-rally for Mumia and against police violence, but also tourists, journalists and passers-by who hadn't quite passed by—then hauling them off to jail.

To anyone arriving in Washington days before the protest, observing police fortifications and aware that there weren't the numbers to block delegates at the point of departure (their hotels) as well as arrival (IMF/WB headquarters), it was clear that "Shut them down!" would be less a practical exhortation than an expression of political will. Afterward there would be complaints among some of the protesters that it was a tactical error to maintain the cry if the objective was impossible; that there had been no flexibility to consider other ways a shut-down might have been possible; that something was amiss organizationally when there were no back-up plans, "and back-up plans to the back-up plans". But simply on the basis of things as they were, if victory is to be measured in moral power, then the defensive bleats of the IMF/WB delegates about defeating poverty and pulling up those countries that have been "left behind" by the worldwide capitalist bonanza marked another success for the protesters.

It's all a liberal feint, of course. No one came out to announce that the debt was canceled in, say, Brazil, which the World Bank applauds for identifying "'social justice' as a priority" but which had to spend $216 billion servicing the external debt between 1989 and 1997, and even then still owed $212 billion. (On the same day it was reporting on the protests, the Washington Post ran a moist story about staggering rates of alcoholism among Brazil's Maxakali Indians. Though they are "economically paralyzed, socially isolated and politically invisible", the writer concluded comfortably that "denial may actually be their biggest problem".)

But the moral argument never was intended for the delegates. As in Seattle with the WTO, A16 put the issues of debt, "structural adjustment" and the worldwide transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich on the public radar screen. Hostile commentators have got a lot of mileage out of the idea that this was a protest without a cause, or with too many causes to make sense of; that we're all "global village idiots", as the Wall Street Journal noted, without the clarity of the now-sentimentalized sixties antiwar protesters. But debt slavery is not a hard thing to grasp for most

***Three weeks before A16, two staff members of the AFL's department of field mobilization put the case to the federation: ignoring the protest would be suicidal for future alliances. Jobs With Justice would be the pivot.***

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people with too many credit cards and too many loans. And "Cancel the Debt" is no less pithy than "Stop the war".

It's a journalistic cliche to take the temperature of a town by its taxi drivers, but again and again immigrant drivers hailed the protesters for bringing their countries' woes to light. "What is going on is simply the recolonization of the so-called developing world, and until now how many Americans even heard of the IMF?" said a driver from Ethiopia (total debt 1996, $10 billion; debt per person, $173; GNP per person, $102). "This is why we are taxi drivers", said a former car dealer from Nigeria (total debt 1996, $31.4 billion; debt per person, $275; GNP per person, $272). The best measure of victory, though, would totally elude the big (and even small "progressive") media. That's the degree to which a particular action moves opposition closer to movement—not notionally but tactically. Coming out of Seattle there was an irritating game being played among defiants, a kind of one-upmanship of suffering, or perhaps machismo? Outside a planning meeting of the direct-action faction at the Calvary Baptist Church the Friday before A16, one guy who'd been in Seattle asked another if he'd been gassed there. "Hell, yes, three times." To which the first guy replied, "I got hit, like, five times." For others it was seven, or nine or—God help you—not at all.

After Seattle there was also a lot of inflated talk about the Red-Green alliance (now modified to Blue-Green; someone noticed that organized labor is not exactly the IWW), but the crucial division was always between the kids et al. seizing the streets and the big institutions (notably labor) marching safely: illegal and legal, mutually sympathetic (broadly speaking) but mostly separate and certainly unequal, certainly suspicious of each other. Washington was different. Contrary to some grumblers, it was a very good thing that the AFL-CIO didn't come into the coalition sponsoring the permitted march and rally until very late. It couldn't claim turf privilege. There wouldn't be an advance guard of burly Machinists clearing the march route, as there had been in Seattle, and there wouldn't be endless talk of "working groups", of responsible and irresponsible protesters, of "Teamsters and Turtles, Together at Last", the wistful mantra from Seattle that obscured as much, if not more than it revealed. But it was a very good thing that labor did come into the coalition, adding organization skills and numbers.

Before labor came in, there was talk of "tens of thousands" of expected participants in the permitted events with almost nothing to back up the prediction. (In the end, the total number of protesters for the weekend was somewhere between 15,000 and 20,000. The DC police don't do protest counts anymore.) They had five walkie-talkies instead of thirty-five, a dozen "peacekeepers" for the march instead of about 250 (most of them tenacious young women, who maintained the line of march without being bullies), no working alliance with the direct-action faction, no clear plan even for building the stage. It wasn't until April 12 that an Ironworkers local committed about ten volunteers for the task and arranged for the heavy equipment. Stage-building night, which commenced about twelve hours before the rally was set to begin, said it all, as AFL officials were laying planks for the forklift and hauling scaffolding while the putative organizer of the stage crew was driving around to Home Depot.

***The father of a Maryland state trooper, told me his son was given the instruction that should things get dangerously out of hand, "don't worry about anything; shoot to kill".***

But how labor came in was the decisive factor. Not at the insistence of the big unions, not even at the instigation of the top dogs at AFL HQ (in fact, almost despite them), but through the agency and organizational know-how of Jobs With Justice, the nationwide labor-community coalition whose own tradition of direct action suited it well as the interlocutor between the unions and the organized street forces. As Simon Greer, JWJ's chief tactician for A16 and liaison to the direct-action faction, put it, "The AFL didn't come out of Seattle saying, 'Wow, that was fun working with the black bloc and the Direct Action Network folks.' The breakthrough idea from Seattle was 'We're not all special interests; we're in this together.' But quickly that rhetorical enthusiasm dissipated."

By March it looked as though almost no one would be together for the April events. The Jubilee 2000 organizers, with extensive labor participation, had their main event on April 9. The AFL would thunder away at China on April 12, bringing some 10,000 unionists to town to lobby against permanent normal trade relations and offering up a stew of human rights and, especially from the Steelworkers' George Becker, foam-flecked anticommunism. Everyone else was coming to town for the 16th, and even before they converged no one would remember the rest. The AFL wasn't interested in A16—too symbolic, too exhausting on the members, too potentially out of control. But random activists, trade unionists, union staff began pressing Jobs With Justice. The "movement", such as it is, was coming to town, and where was labor? The Naderites and their allies had been calling unions cold to try to get them on board for the rally, but without relationships to those unions they got nowhere.

Three weeks before A16, two staff members of the AFL's department of field mobilization, one of them with a long JWJ history, put the case to the federation: ignoring the protest would be suicidal for future alliances, and in any case would be politically derelict. Jobs With Justice would be the pivot. It got the Steelworkers and six other unions to sign on. In the end, the federation moved, nervously. Could JWJ get the numbers? Could it guarantee safety for thousands of people who wouldn't be coming to break the law? "This was a new thing for the AFL", Greer said. "To its credit it showed real committment to coalition work and solidarity without having to be in charge. And we staked our reputation on making it work." Earlier I'd asked an AFL official what would count as a disaster for the AFL on A16. "Oh, if Gerry McEntee [AFSCME president] gets arrested, I think that would pretty much be it." However much top union leaders may speechify against capitalism, they have a stake in playing by the rules. And, as anyone familiar with organizaed labor knows, the labor movement is very good at holding a grudge.

Partly because it was late but also because the people at Jobs With Justice have a far different orientation from the bureaucrats, the tactics of labor had to be totally

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different from those of Seattle. Coordination with the direct action people was essential. The question, Greer says, was how would the march relate to the direct action? not now separate can we keep things? "Our main issues, which we told the DAN folks, were, first, that we had no moral imperative to take any particular street. If you block F, we'll take E. We ended up marching on none of the streets permitted. And, second, that we had a moral obligation to the marchers' safety." The view of many after Seattle that labor had betrayed our side when John Sweeney failed to lead 25,000 marchers into gas-laden streets. It's nice to imagine that the AFL might ever be such a militant institution, but quite apart from Sweeney's priorities, the fact is that most of those 25,000 people didn't come to Seattle to be gassed; and in most protest situations there will be masses of people who are passionate to participate but aren't ready to flout the law and aren't willing to risk their safety.

For A16, Greer and the others decided that solidarity was crucial but that if there was any hope of drawing unions into closer relationship with direct-action forces in the future, peacekeeping here would be the key. And not just for those anxiously sitting at AFL HQ. "Philadelphia ACT-UP brought 800 people with HIV or AIDS", Greer noted by way of example, "and we made a promise to them that so far as we could help it, they wouldn't wind up in jail." So the peacekeepers were trained and given their orders, but Greer was also on the direct-action faction's communication system.

On the Friday before, at a major planning meeting of all the direct-action affinity groups, Fred Azcarate, the director of JWJ, and Stewart Acuff of the AFL thanked those assembled for giving labor the opportunity to be part of their action, for their dedication and discipline. On Sunday, people flowed in and out of the rally and back to the streets. The Ellipse had the feel of a love-in for the presence of the kids, and when things were getting hot on the periphery, people could hear it and they could move. (They were not, needless to say, directed to do so from the stage.) The main medical team for the protesters was situated at the home of SEIU Local 82, which was also the place where the puppet-making moved after police had shut down the Convergence Center. When it came time for the march to begin, the peacekeepers held back the designated front line of the march to let the puppets lead the way. It was called "the labor march", but it didn't look it, and when people peeled away to move toward streets being held by affinity groups, by and large the peacekeepers weren't obstructive.

Partway through the march the direct-action faction's coordinators decided that it would be tactically smart for everyone to merge into the march anyway: victory could be declared, the street action wouldn't be left to fizzle out. The police never quite knew where the march would turn, but except in a couple of instances, they didn't threaten it. Ultimately, even the black bloc entered the Ellipse. None of this means there was no tension between the various factions (even within factions), or that we've arrived at some movement launchpad. This was one action, and while tactics can foster trust and unity of purpose, eventually politics will intrude (though it may take some time for those to be defined).

***For all the dreadlocks, A16 direct action activists were blindingly white. The biggest black contingent of the day was the group that had come with ACT-UP for the permitted march.***

Right now, there are contradictions galore. AFL took its lead from Jobs With Justice this time around, but it's still an establishment institution, not structured for risks or radicalism. George Becker's enthusiasm for A16 turned out to be as fiery as his anticommunism, and for the same reason. Like a lot of unionists, he wants to protect jobs and he is moved by stories of exploitation and injustice. But he views the world the way labor has for decades, and it's a perspective that not only continues to dog US labor's relationships with unions internationally but also places labor in a different universe from its young A16 allies. It's far from clear whether such alliances will ever extend beyond a particular agreed-upon action.

Labor committed itself to the 16th and showed its organizational strength. On the 17th, when a few thousand protesters braved a numbing rain ("We're here, we're wet; cancel the debt") and many more police, they were once again alone. And the day after that, when 600 to 700 people were in jail and reports of brutality from inside were hair-raising, the Metro Labor Council called the City Council to complain, but didn't bring in any further pressure to bear, nor was it asked to.

The biggest arrest of the weekend was a brokered one: in return for a police stand-down from their posture of imminent violent assault on April 17, about 500 protesters would let the police deny them their freedom. I've never thought much of choreographed arrests, but the image of waves of people, many soaked to the skin, putting it all on the line was very powerful. To the labor crowd, the civil disobedience is understandable, but the protesters' ethic of "jail solidarity", by which arrestees refuse to cooperate with authorities and hold to their cells until everyone is released, is beyond them. There may be arguments about the efficacy of such a jail strategy, but it's the hard stuff that is the test of an alliance, and labor might note that there's not much of a step from jail solidarity to "An injury to one is an injury to all."

Jeff Engels, of the Inland Boatman's Union/ILWU and the Seattle affinity group, has been telling his comrades that if they want a real movement they've got to make room for people who aren't like them. Organizationally, they'll have to figure out how to have consensus (a group ethic even more powerful than jail solidarity) and accountable leadership, how to have a structure that is decentralized but still lets people find out what's going on, and how to engage people who might not have a computer or might not be able to spend four hours at a meeting.

These are, needless to say, old questions in a new frame. But it's exciting to be asking them again, and not only as a theoretical exercise. CP

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## *Move Over, Pacifica!*

# Here Come Indy Media

By Laura Flanders

Throughout the days of protest in Washington this April, the phonecalls from the Independent Media Center (IMC) came in breathless, by the hour. Photographs and eyewitness bulletins were there for the taking on the internet, and in parts of DC you could tune into Mobilization Radio, an unlicensed micro-station, which transmitted stream-of-consciousness broadcasts from various undisclosed locations until the FCC shut it down.

Unlike many a DC rally, the anti-capitalist action in the capital was not laid on primarily to play to CNN's anchors: there were no sound-bite-ready official spokespeople, few celebrities, no press kits, not even a predictable march route. But that doesn't mean that A16 was media-unfriendly: far from it. Communications-savvy activists worked every technology at their disposal and those who were in the loop got all the news, up to the latest burst of pepper-spray. On the web, the IMC is at www.indymedia.org. Its non-virtual home was a whitewashed art gallery on 9th and N, a friendly, disheveled part of town.

By April 15, some thousand volunteer media-makers had registered to play their part. Up a ladder, on a storage shelf-turned studio, camera-people shot interviews. Barely a week later, a video documentary was available via satellite for public access cable stations (and others) to broadcast. (See www.papertiger.org.) In a sound-proof walk-in closet, audio techies bounced the sound from the streets, via palm-size recorders, onto laptop computers, to the web, for far-off community radio stations to downloaded and play on-air.

The old-media folks faced a temporary crisis. Smack in the middle of going to press with the "Blind Spot" (the IMC's four-page broadsheet) the in-house copier crashed, and three nearby Kinko shops—the 24-hour standby of pamphlet-printers everywhere — shut down, citing "riot activity". "The employee was polite as he asked us to leave", reported Troy Skeels for the IMC, "but explained that our presence was putting his shop in danger of being closed due to police pressure." With no riot in sight, Skeels and friends hiked to Georgetown, and produced several thousand copies of BLIND SPOT there instead.

There was a reunion of sorts on the streets of the city. In Chicago, at the 1996 Democratic Convention, DC's chief of police Charles Ramsey, was deputy commander of the Chicago police department. The "protest pit" strategy his forces used there greeted activists again in Washington. Relying on heavy cop presence and barricades to block all access to the DNC in Chicago, Ramsey's forces fenced critics into "free speech" zones — parking lots miles from the site. He was trying, no doubt, to prevent another '68 debacle when police riots made it onto network tv.

Ramsey's tactics in Chicago inspired media activists to collaborate and the prototype of the IMC. To get as much information out as widely as they could, given minimal access and maximum constraint, reporters from different media shared resources, ability and energy, to cover what was not in the mainstream and put the info out onto the world wide web. "Not as many people looked, four years ago," Jay Sands, one of the group's many coordinators, told me. "But Indymedia took off in Seattle and the habit is catching on." Next stop is Los Angeles, Philadelphia, then Prague. For many, the world wide web will be the only way to see what happens at the IMF's annual meeting this fall.

***"There's tear gas outside the Treasury...the press conference is at 4:00...the FCC are right outside..."***

Initiatives like the under-funded, over-stretched, IMC collective may not solve the media-access problem, but they sure can help. When Mobilization Radio, the low-watt station that covered the protest, announced that the FCC were at the door to shut them down, three hundred demonstrators arrived on the scene in minutes. "What happened next was probably unprecedented in the history of microradio," wrote Joe Tuba, for the IMC. Apparently taken aback by the crowd, the police, FBI, FCC and assorted other intelligence left the scene without making arrests or grabbing equipment. "The crowd immediately took the street in celebration...and the station was disassembled and carried out as the participants left the building and regained anonymity as members of the crowd," wrote Tuba.

The fun and excitement at the IMC sure beats the dismal drone of the Pacifica wars. It's hard to keep up with shenanigans at what used to be the nation's premier public broadcast network. Things there, and in particular, the post-purge nightly news broadcasts, seem to go from bad to worse. Time was that Pacifica would have been at the center of the action. Clearly some individuals, like Amy Goodman, still are, but in Washington, Pacifica was on the outs with the activists. Even the merry IMC gang drew the line at working with the Pacifica Network News (PNN.) Shortly before the big day, the IMC decided to join the boycott against PNN by refusing to credential PNN reporters, give them interviews, or allow PNN to use the material the IMC created.

"Many feel that Pacifica Network News has compromised its journalistic integrity by acts of censorship. There is an ongoing strike by stringers and freelancers and it was felt that we needed to be in solidarity with them", wrote Liam Kirsher for the IMC. Come April 16, a PNN reporter was seen red-faced and furious, screaming at an anti-World Bank protester. Why? She was mad that the activists' blockade was in her way.

It was a sad moment, indicative of the path some claiming to represent Pacifica have taken. But they better watch out. While Pacifica's management and their friends are fiddling, the action in public media is getting hot. April's anti-World Bank and IMF protests showed that. CP

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## A CounterPunch Journey

# With Tussy in Toledo

By Peter Linebaugh

Dear Alexander and Jeffrey,

Toledo has changed since you, Alexander, were here last in 1995 and we touted your book, the *Golden Age is in Us,* to the crowd at the University which included the old-timer from the 1934 Auto-Lite strike. What with the Minneapolis teamsters' strike and the San Francisco dock strike of that spring of 1934, we like to think that Toledo set the stage for labor's conquest of auto, steel, and coal that decade, kickstarting the New Deal. The Golden Age began to come out of us then, eh? both as a time of dreams – freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech, freedom of worship – and as the practical politics towards the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act, and thus the Welfare State.

Sad to say, it's crumbled since then, the welfare state and the old Auto-Lite plant and the Elm Street bridge where the historic battle occurred in May 1934. A Greenbelt, as they call the four-lane stretch of asphalt connecting a new factory with a new prison, has been installed instead..

1999 was significant to the connection between production and imprisonment. February had the big explosion at Ford's River Rouge Power Plant, and the burned workers died over the next weeks despite the best efforts of area hospital Burn Units. Meanwhile Wilford Berry, called The Volunteer, was poisoned to death in execution of capital punishment, as Ohio resumed the penalty of death after a moratorium of thirty years. The dread deed was done on February 19 when, coincidentally, the first shift at the Toledo Jeep plant downed tools against increases in forced overtime, against job cuts, and against the low amounts found in the annual bonus or profit-sharing checks. Otherwise produced around 770 Jeeps a day. We call it a wildcat, the company called it "insufficient flow". Between globally planned exploitation and socially induced mortality lie a series of filters to guarantee flow, for it is not only products that must move smoothly, workers must too. Prison is one such filter: schools provide another.

Coincidentally? Since Daimler-Benz had purchased Chrysler only a few weeks earlier, memories naturally came to mind of the German production methods prevalent under the Third Reich when Daimler employed slaves furnished by the Nazi concentration camps. With corpses actually hanging above the assembly line in some factories, it was difficult for even lawyers to distinguish capital punishment from the punishment of capitalism. Now - May Day 2000 - we *think* about it, seizing hold of memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.

When Eleanor ("Tussy") Marx, the youngest daughter of the celebrated sage of the proletariat, stopped off to change trains in Toledo in the fall of 1886, she had already begun thinking about death and exploitation. The agitation for a retrial against the savage sentences meted out on August 20 against the Chicago Eight was at its height when she arrived for her American tour. She urged her listeners to throw three bombs – Agitation, Education, and Organization. She partook in the movement for an 8-hour day, supposed to commence on May Day 1886.

**Tussy Marx urged her listeners to throw three bombs: Agitation, Education and Organization.**

Tussy studied Ohio. She listed ninety-four working class newspapers across four pages and the last was *The Industrial News* of Toledo. She read the summary wisdom of Ohio's labor bureau - "man must die that trade may thrive", "the American workman has ceased to be a mechanic and has become a machine" – ah, such prescience! In Cincinnati a wonderful poet took her to a club and introduced her to a cowboy show. One of the guys gave an earnest speech on behalf of his desolated, isolated co-workers against the capitalists in general and the ranchers in particular. Up in Toledo however it was the other end of the meat trade that was on her mind. She was on her way to Chicago. Here on Lake Erie she spoke against the hangings of the noble anarchists.

In Chicago she went "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored" with the Haymarket martyrs in jail. Their generation saw the relationship between the struggle against plantation slavery and the struggle against factory slavery. To those afraid that socialism meant no one could say "my coat" anymore, she said on the contrary, everyone would have a coat, but no one could say anymore "my factory" or "my land" and certainly not "my hands".

Daimler-Chrysler (D-C) claims our land and our hands. Last years its profits after taxes were $5.8 billion. In the 1996 election this was Clinton's last stop before the Democratic Convention. He made a point of going to the Jeep plant while the millionth Jeep came off the line. The UAW guy who showed him around was arrested after the convention: his hand found in the till. The Jeep Cherokee – so apt a vehicle for the bullying profligate prosperity of the empire under Clinton – has been the major export and advantage to the US balance-of-payments. It is offensive, isn't it? to have the subjects of genocide memorialized in this hideous fashion.

Mike Leonardi, the death penalty abolitionist and Green activist, gave me a tour – his D & C Tour (Death and Crime) of Toledo. DaimlerChrysler is building a shiny new plant in the old Stickney Avenue neighborhood. The new building is a glistening, many-funneled palace of robots planted on barren acres of dubious landfill – toxic dirt hauled down from Detroit - and upon the contaminated Ottawa River whence it gets water and can dump its garbage. To the east is the Hoffman Road Solid Waste Sanitary Landfill. The plant is situated amid highways, rail lines, the river, and a power-grid from Davis Bessie nuclear plant to the east and Fermi II nuclear plant to the north.

Mayor of Toledo, Cardy Finkbeiner, has given the corporate giant $280 mil-

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lion in tax abatements. The give-away is equal to one quarter the cost of the new plant and, as it happens, the annual budget of the Toledo public schools. In return, Finkbeiner was promised 4,900 jobs; the fine print, however, said 4,200; and few believe it will much exceed 3,000 when the plant finally opens, and the old one shuts down.

The Mayor helped bulldoze an old working-class neighborhood misusing the Fed's power of eminent domain, so that the corporate execs at the new plant will be able to look out on lawn, capitalist grass. Finkbeiner hoodwinked the neighborhood; death and transfer trauma have followed the displacement. One lady from the neighborhood came to hear Ralph Nader and asked, How could they get away with it? Under the circumstances, Nader's answer could not be satisfactory, though he did ask a corporate lawyer of Daimler-Chrysler lurking in the crowd whether he wished to speak. Many in the audience wished he had insisted on a reply bringing him face to face with the lady.

The other building up that way in north Toledo (jobs, jobs, jobs) is the new prison. The prison is built in Miracle Park. They had to build a highway because prisoners cannot be transported on residential roads. Mike Leonardi's Dirt & Crime Tour of the millenium community ended on an unexpected note. I-280 is the highway we took and it links the new prison with the Greenbelt and downtown. The Greenbelt goes from nowhere to nowhere. It was the excuse to demolish Auto-Lite. One end is to be the new prison and at the other in a bit of downtown desolation near the police HQ they are building the Child Study Institute - CSI – which is to be the new juvenile prison.

Now, get this. We just learned a couple weeks ago that the superintendant of the Toledo public schools recommends closing the Old West End Junior High School. This is a hop, step, and a jump down the street from the new CSI. Are we to imagine a little chain-gang of children, their chains tinkling against the pavement?! a coffle of little ones?! On the very same day that this recommendation was made as part of a $16 million cut in the school budget with lay-offs of 235 teachers, the Ohio Senate voted to lower the age from twelve years to ten at which juveniles can be sent to detention facilities. "Kiddie prisons", to quote one senator, are cheaper than foster care.

"Keep the children at play and the men at work, is my plan", said Toledo's forgotten mayor, "Golden Rule" Jones in 1897, and he set about to bring free music, municipal parks, libraries, public baths to the town, and to the crime problem, he dispensed mercy in the court room and armed the police with canes not pistols.

## *In Toledo mediocrity is married to tyranny and the off-spring are jails called institutes and expropriations called landscape.*

Toledo's history of municipal socialism has been turned upside down, jails replacing schools. The dream ladders of upward social mobility are replaced by the a dumbing labyrinth of the bottom. In reality it is an *ergastulum* – the barracks built for slaves on the latifundia of the Roman empire - but unlike the carceral archipelago it is not surrounded by sea but is *downtown*.

At the higher end of the labyrinthine filter, at the University, the presidents have come and gone. We have one now skilled in the arts of sycophantic foolery and especially pleasing to the scrap metal dealer who heads up the board of trustees. The student newspaper, the AAUP, and four previous chairmen of the trustees call for his resignation. The administrators keep tabs of professors with 'morale lists,' try to shut down the student newspaper, and threatened to fire anyone who spreads "rumors". In Toledo mediocrity is married to tyranny and the off-spring are jails called institutes and expropriations called landscape.

Tussy's father taught us to analyze the composition of the working class. We used to call this the General Law of Capitalist Accumulation, cf. Chapter 25, *Das Kapital*. The law states that accumulation of capital is accumulation of the proletariat. Its corollary is just as important, the growth of the active army of industrial proletarians is accompanied by the growth of pauperism, the infamous "lazarus-layers of the reserve army". The reserves take the form here of children, homeworkers, the indigent, and the babbitry of the bankrupt. We think the law and the corollary are expressed in Toledo's urban planning at either end of the Greenbelt, D-C at one end and the CSI at the other.

What's literally in us is not the Golden Age but poisons. It's the "chemical age within us". Envirosafe, Ohio's only hazardous waste landfill, squats foul and fetid between the city's Hungarian neighborhood and Lake Erie, no signs of life around at all, not even the phony "landscaping" so dear to management's golfing heart. Underneath it pipes laid down in 1944 convey Toledo's water supply from Lake Erie. Lucas County has the highest rates of cancer, stroke, heart attack, and obstructive pulmonary disease in the State of Ohio. British-Petroleum have bought out the independents in the last five years. Sunoco Refinery on the other side of the Maumee River emits its stink. Cancer among the grown-ups and asthma among the kids. In February at Garfield Elementary school they had to move the children into the auditorium because their eyes were burning and breathing was difficult.

Meanwhile, Mayor Finkbeiner tries to turn another coin by selling the land of the Battle of Fallen Timbers. That's where the Feds did defeat the Indians, in 1794, the first victory of the U.S.A. putting an end to an actual "golden age", while establishing eminent domain. Shortly afterwards, the French revolutionist, Constance Volney, whose *Ruins* anticipated both Brecht and DuBois, passed by the battle


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site on his way to Detroit. He escaped the guillotine in France only by going to prison, and the Alien Act in America only by migrating. He admired the forest dwellers in the infancy of nations – "the earth being free, and its possession secure and easy" – but class distinctions "reduced to a regular system the maintenance of disorder."

I toured of the old Jeep plant where amid the oily puddles underfoot and the crash and groan of the conveyor lines overhead, I was taken to admire the mural in the lunch-room, Vending Machine Dispensary is more like it, because on one of the walls was painted in forest green and lake blue an imagined primeval forest scene. A trout stream and a dirt road upon which one of the Clintonian SUVs hurtles along. In the sky is a portrait of the Great Spirit – an Indian with a lone eagle feather – this phantom overseeing you while you enjoy in the bleak light and low whine of florescent lighting a cigarette or "lunch" from one of the machines. In days of yore, the golden age, Toledó was a Great Black Swamp, the everglades of the north. Manhatten Marsh Nature Preserve owned by Citizens for Buckeye Basin and there is a bald eagle nest. A swamp, Mike Leonardi explains, are the kidneys of the earth, cleaning the water.

Last year factory workers in Toledo averaged 9.5% weekly wage increases, triple the national average. They comprise 15% of the area workforce. The increase is attributed to increases in forced overtime, stagnant hiring, and high auto sales. Now that the Ho Chi Minh trail is to be asphalted, Daimler will take Jeep to Vietnam. The Jeep worker lives in fear of job loss, and with it bereft of medical insurance, devoid of income. Meanwhile, last years $8,000 "bonus" in "profit sharing" seemed consistent with the mood of settling for less.

John Balonek, an English teacher at Scott High School, is the first in the state to refuse to let his child take the odious "proficiency tests" of state command. These wicked tests of fate have replaced the harmonies of music or the merriment of recreation in educational policy. Toledo elementary schools provide no play or recess for children. Music programs have shut down. Jail or the plant, and in extreme cases judicial poisoning (capital punishment) and for the rest of us, poisoning of earth, air, and water.

***Toledo's mayor is selling off the land of the Battle of Fallen Timbers.***

The future? Peering into the Void with the eleventh century Chinese master, Hung-Chih we're advised, "With the hundred grass tips in the busy marketplace graciously share yourself". Well, before the corporate lawn mower gets to work let's mention the some of the grass-roots and grass-tips: Ishaq is getting Staughton Lynd to speak to us on behalf of the Lucasville Five languishing on death row; Dr Alkalimat is persisting in the project of End Poverty Now with his First Saturday assemblies; Anita Rios and Michaela Brennan agitate for 'Health Care for All,' the autonomists have returned from DC interrupting the world bankers, Rev. Vines has taken on the school closings; our Food Co-op has filed suit against Daimler-Chrysler. In other words the Greens, Reds, and Blacks are on our feet, landing the occasional counterpunch, if not finding (yet) the golden age. We do notice that East Timor has just declared May Day a national holiday! Around the world people memorialize as May Day the combination of capital punishment the devaluation of labor. Maybe we'll get together too to remember some lines of Byron, as did the generation of Eleanor Marx,

*They never fail who die*
*In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;*
*Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs*
*Be strung to city gates and castle walls –*
*But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years*
*Elapse, and other share as dark a doom,*
*They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts*
*Which overpower all others, and conduct*
*The world at last to freedom.*

**Peter Linebaugh** is the author of *The London Hanged,* on the CounterPunch best 100 nonfiction books.

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